

Getting back in the Game

by Connie Blaine

Starting Over — Re-entering the Workforce

If you've been out of the workforce for a while, chances are you're worried about how to get re-employed. Transitioning back to employment after a long absence can be difficult. Follow this advice to minimize your frustration and to find the job you want:



Update your skills

If it has been a long time since your last job, you need to find out about the skills that are in demand in your industry now. Talk with people who are in the industry you want to be in, and find out what is considered necessary

these days. Then get training for the skills you need. If possible, do this before you start to job hunt so you can include these skills on your resume. Use Choices (see page ???) to help you identify your skills.

Call your former employer

Undoubtedly, the easiest way to get back into the workforce is to go back to where you left it—if that's possible, and if you liked your job. Contact your former co-workers as well as the boss. If you were respected and well-liked, and left on good terms, they might find a way for you to return. But if not, thank them anyway and ask for leads and contacts to help you find a job.

Consider temporary work

Temp agencies place even professional-level workers in many different fields. Use the yellow pages and the Internet to locate temp agencies in your area.

Network

Contact friends, acquaintances and family. These are the people who will be interested in your welfare and will want to help you find a job. Send them your resume and a brief letter explaining that you are returning to a career. Ask them to keep their ears open and tell you about any leads they hear of. Thank them sincerely for their help, and follow up often with phone calls. This can be a very effective networking technique.

Prepare for some catch-up in your career

You may have to take a pay cut and re-enter the workplace at a lower level than when you left. Employers prefer applicants who have had recent job experience. But don't let this get you down. Take the best option available to you and use it as an opportunity to showcase your skills and personal qualities. When other positions open up, you'll soon be able to move up to your former level, and beyond.

On the Web

<http://www.bluesuitmom.com/career/changingjobs/advice/employmentgap.html>

<http://womansdivorce.com/job-tool-kit.html>

http://www.ivillage.com/work/job/get/articles/0,,165425_205562,00.html?arrivalSA=1&cobrandRef=0&arrival_freqCap=2

http://www.ivillage.com/work/job/succeed/articles/0,,187833_57223,00.html?arrivalSA=1&cobrandRef=0&arrival_freqCap=1&pba=adid=9201148